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# Farm Broadcasters Letter



Letter No. 2179

September 6, 1984

## OUTLOOK FOR CROPS, CATTLE PRICES

Most major field crops are expected to show production gains this year, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. U.S. wheat is forecast at 4 pct., corn 84 pct., soybeans 30 pct., and cotton 62 pct. from 1983. Commercial beef production during the second half of 1984 will probably decline about 4 pct. from the large year-earlier total, mainly because of a drop in nonfed slaughter. As beef production declines, prices should strengthen. Stronger prices for fed cattle and this fall's lower feed prices should encourage higher feeder cattle prices.

## OUTLOOK FOR FARM INCOME

The outlook for 1984 farm income remains largely unchanged from second-quarter U.S. Department of Agriculture forecasts. Net cash income is still forecast between \$34 and \$38 billion, down from 1983's record \$40.1 billion. The decline will be due to cash expenses rising faster than cash receipts. Net farm income is expected to range from \$29 to \$33 billion, up sharply from 1983's drought-reduced total of \$16.1 billion.

## WHEAT EXPORT FORECAST

The U.S. wheat export forecast for 1984/85 was raised to reflect stronger world demand, particularly in the Soviet where wheat imports are forecast at a record level, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In addition, crop prospects in a number of competing exporting countries have declined, meaning smaller exportable supplies. World coarse grain demand also improved this month, indicating a possible rebound in the depressed trade levels of the past two seasons. Demand for U.S. sorghum and corn by Mexico, along with Canada's short barley crop, could mean improved export prospects for U.S. coarse grain.

## FARMER COOPERATIVES

Net margins of farmer cooperatives climbed nearly 25 pct., but business volume declined 3.6 pct., according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The combined sales were \$66.7 billion, compared with \$69.2 billion in 1982. Net margins were \$1.06 billion, compared with \$854 million in 1982 and \$1.4 billion in 1981.

## OATS REMAIN IN RELEASE

Oats in the farmer-owned grain reserve will remain in release status through Sept. 30, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. On Sept. 4, the adjusted price for oats was \$1.72 per bushel, 7 cents above the release level of \$1.65 for reserve oats. Storage payments for oats will remain stopped and interest will continue to accrue.

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PRICES  
RECEIVED

The August All Farm Products Index of Prices Received by Farmers was unchanged from July, at 144 percent of its Jan.-Dec. 1977 average, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The index was 5 points--that's 3.6 pct. above a year ago. Higher prices for oranges, lettuce, tomatoes, milk and tobacco were offset by lower prices for cattle, corn, soybeans, broilers and hogs.

PRICES PAID

The Index of Prices Paid by Farmers for Commodities and Services, Interest, Taxes, and Farm Wage Rates for August was 165 pct. of its 1977 base, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This was unchanged from July but 4 points, or 2.5 pct., above a year earlier. Index increases from July to Aug. of this year for family living items and feeder livestock were offset by decreases for feed and fuel.

ANNIVERSARY  
OF WILDERNESS  
ACT

Sept. 3 marked the 20th anniversary of the Wilderness Act, which established the National Wilderness Preservation System. According to Sec'y of Agriculture John R. Block, "Americans are fortunate to have a legacy of our nation's natural heritage. Since Jan., 82 new national forest wildernesses totaling approximately 2.8 million acres have been added to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Another 17 bills, which could add several million acres to the system, are pending before Congress."

USSR HARVEST  
WEATHER

Mostly favorable harvest weather continued over Western USSR crop areas except for parts of the Central Region, Volga Vyatsk and the northern Urals, which received moderate rainfall. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, wet weather in these areas delayed the spring grain harvest and winter grain planting. Unseasonably cold air brought some light, scattered frosts as far south as the northern Ukraine. Corn and sunflowers are still developing in the south and the cold will slow maturation. Unseasonably warm, dry weather in eastern spring wheat areas promoted grain maturity.

POLICY BOARD  
FOR RURAL DEV.

Sec'y of Agriculture John R. Block has established a policy board of key USDA officials to advise him on the operation of the resource conservation and development program. The program provides technical and financial assistance, including loans, for projects in rural communities to conserve and improve the use of land, develop natural resources and enhance social, economic and environmental conditions.

SHEEP  
SCRAPIE

Two cases of sheep scrapie were confirmed during August, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. One is in Indiana and one in Wisconsin. The animals, along with any closely related animals will be destroyed and disposed of. The owners will be paid two-thirds the appraised value of the animals up to \$300. The 22 cases reported in this fiscal year beginning Oct. 1, 1983, through Aug. 20, 1984, have reached an all time high. There have not been as many reported cases since 1956.

EXPORTS: DAIRY,  
LIVESTOCK,  
POULTRY

The export value of U.S. dairy, livestock and poultry commodities and dressed hides and skins, including leather, totaled nearly \$2.3 billion during the first half of 1984, more than 14 pct. over the same 1983 period, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Nearly all of the gains were accounted for by increased exports of cattle hides and skins, inedible tallow, beef and veal, leather, mink pelts, meat and bone meal (MBM), and dairy cattle. Most of the gains resulted from a combination of increased volume and higher unit prices, except for animal fats and oils which decreased in export volume.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE "Cotton and Wool Update"...USDA economist Terry Townsend examines the cotton supply situation and factors contributing to the increase in stocks. Victor Powell interviews. (201)

"USDA Patents"...The Department of Agriculture has more than 1,200 patented inventions that are available for license. Ann Whitehead, Agricultural Research Serv., talks about USDA patents and their importance to agricultural research. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (202)

"FAS Sales Reporting System"...Jean Nollmeyer, Foreign Agricultural Serv., describes the Department's export sales reporting system and why it was established. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (203)

"EPA Gasoline Lead Phasedown"...The Environmental Protection Agency is considering a proposal to reduce the amount of lead in gasoline. USDA energy economist Gerald Grinnell talks about the implications of this phasedown to agriculture. Don Elder interviews. (204)

"Groundwater Contamination of Underground Fuel Tanks"...USDA energy economist Gerald Grinnell describes how underground fuel tanks can cause groundwater contamination, and the implications of this problem to farmers. Don Elder interviews. (205)

LOAN RATES:  
11-7/8 Commodity loans disbursed in Sept. by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corp. will carry a 11-7/8 pct. interest rate. The new rate, down from 12-1/8 pct., reflects the interest rate charged CCC by the U.S. Treasury.

LARGEST &  
SMALLEST  
WILDERNESS According to the Forest Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the largest National Forest Wilderness is the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness, 2,229,211 acres--located on six National Forests in Idaho. The smallest National Forest Wilderness is the Wambaw Creek Wilderness in South Carolina, 1,640 acres. The State with the largest acreage of National Forest Wilderness is Alaska, with 5,453,366 acres.

LEAVE MANGOS  
IN HAWAII A U.S. Postal Service advertisement appearing the the July Reader's Digest could mislead the public into illegally mailing mangos from Hawaii to the U.S. Mainland, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The ad showed a postcard with the message. "Hawaii great! Did you get the 200 mangos?" USDA reminds the public that you can't bring or mail mangos or many other types of fruit from Hawaii because they may contain destructive agricultural pests.

1985 SUGAR  
PRICE According to Under Sec'y of Agriculture Daniel Amstutz, the initial market stabilization price for sugar will be 21.57 cents per pound for fiscal 1985, up .4 of a cent from the current level of 21.17 cents. The new market stabilization price reflects the proposed price support loan rate of 17.75 cents per pound, transportation costs of 2.68 cents per pound, interest costs of 0.94 cents per pound and an incentive factor of 0.2 cents per pound to encourage producers to sell in the market.



OFF MIKE

Two farm broadcasters are members of the newly appointed National Dairy Task Force: Ed Slusarczyk (WTLB/Ag Radio Net, Utica, NY) and Orion Samuelson (WGN, Chicago, IL). The task force met for the first time Aug. 10. The National Dairy Promotion and Research Board appointed the task force to help implement provisions in the dairy and Tobacco Adjustment Act of 1983 ... Earlier on we received an interesting letter from Ken Johnson (KEEN, San Jose, CA). Ken reports his air time is limited to specialized reports from time to time, since he's pretty much gotten out of farm reporting. He says there's not much farm programming in his area because the stations are too urban. He points out that Silicon Valley used to be the Valley of Hearts' Delight and there were probably close to 100,000 tons of different variety pears produced. He says, "Today I know of only one commercial Bartlett pear grower in the valley. The land sells for \$8.00-\$10.00 per square foot! Not much sense in farming on land that valuable." Certainly not unless you can grow microchips ... Words you didn't hear on our radio news line: "Montana flies are getting fewer but larger." That was the first reading Becky Keiper gave a billboard item. Gary Crawford hand wrote the item and to Becky the "I" looked like an "L" and somehow the "R" looked like an "I." Anyway, the second reading came out right: "Montana fires are getting fewer but larger." That is, the second reading came out okay after everyone settled down from the good laugh they had from the first reading ... And finally this bit of "wisdom" from the pen of Johnny Martin (Ohio Farm Bureau, Columbus, OH). "Anything you try to fix will take longer and cost more than you thought it would." How well we know, how well we know!

FROM OUR RADIO  
SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1423...(Weekly 13½ min documentary) Researchers at a USDA center in Nebraska are trying to make our red meat supplies more plentiful, nutritious, and cheaper to produce. This Agriculture USA takes the listener on a tour of the center.

AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT #1412...(Weekly reel of news features) USDA news highlights; Small farm boom; Sunburned cattle; Farm fuels from farm waste.

CONSUMER TIME #905...(Weekly reel of five 2½-3 min features) Running: Who? When? Where?; A gasahol update; Cotton foods?; Coping with stress; Marathon man.

USDA RADIO NEWS SERVICE...Wed, Sept. 12, World tobacco situation, USSR grain situation/outlook, World agriculture supply and demand; Cattle on feed, Milk production; Fri, Sept. 14, World grain situation/outlook; Mon, Sept. 17, Fruit outlook report; Tues, Sept. 18, Tobacco outlook; Wed, Sept. 19, Dairy outlook, World cotton situation, World oilseed situation. Dial the USDA National News lines 202/488-8358 or 8359. All material changed at 5 p.m. EDT each working day.



JAMES L. JOHNSON  
Chief, Radio-Television Division